U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
FACT SHEET ON ISSUES OF ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

As the least segregated minority group, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) live in communities where they face the same adverse environmental impacts as all other residents. However, certain AAPI subgroups may be more adversely affected by environmental factors due to their lifestyle, customs, and everyday activities.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for protecting human health and safeguarding the natural environment – air, water, and land – upon which life depends. Despite EPA's broad environmental mandate certain populations, such as AAPIs, may not have easy access or fully utilize EPA's programs and services because of a lack of awareness of the full range of opportunities available to them. The following list highlights issues that affect AAPIs as they relate to EPA's mission.

General Issues:

! Communities and individuals may not be aware of potential health threats and risks due to exposure to toxic chemicals and other environmental pollutants.
! Businesses and community groups may not be aware of EPA programs in which they may participate.
! Organizations and businesses may not be aware of contracting opportunities with EPA for which they are eligible to compete.
! Individuals, businesses, and community groups may not be aware of financial assistance that may be available to them from EPA.
! Students and job-seekers may not be aware of educational and employment opportunities with EPA.

Program/Service-Specific Issues:

! Many AAPIs work in garment factories and other low paying industries, exposing them to hazardous indoor air pollutants and other toxic chemicals.
! Food consumption data does not take into account qualitative and quantitative differences in diet between AAPIs and the general population. AAPIs tend to consume more imported and often unregulated products which might have pesticides and pose other food safety concerns.
! Low income AAPI groups are at a higher risk of exposure to indoor allergens due to the combination of poor housing, and also may lack access to quality medical care.
! Second-hand smoke is a particular problem for AAPI children since the rate of smoking in AAPI groups is high, with lung cancer being the most common form of malignancy.
! AAPI businesses and community groups may not be aware of the environmental technical assistance available for Superfund site clean-up or for the development of recycling programs.
! AAPIs may not be aware of the possible risks associated with exposure to hazardous waste.

! The consumption of contaminated, noncommercially-caught fish may expose certain AAPI groups to chemical pollutants such as mercury. AAPI community groups may not be aware of the existence of fish consumption advisories issued by state and local health agencies.

EPA's Role in Meeting the Needs of AAPI Communities

EPA is committed to protecting human health and the environment, especially where communities are affected by environmental factors such as air and water pollution, toxic chemicals, and hazardous waste. The agency actively supports the White House Initiative for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI) to increase AAPI participation and involvement by fostering opportunities for economic development, community partnerships, education, and employment.

EPA is developing an inventory of programs and activities to benefit AAPI communities and is planning to collect environmentally-related data on AAPI populations and subpopulations. The agency will also conduct several community site visits to areas with large and diverse AAPI populations, particularly in low-income areas where the need for federal attention is greatest. EPA hopes these efforts will help the agency develop a meaningful report and implementation plan for the White House Initiative that not only meets the agency's goals, mandates, and budget constraints, but also reflects a commitment and sensitivity to the AAPI community.